

City News

February 2018

City Fosters Public-Private Urban Renewal Partnership

The City of Veneta and its Urban Renewal Agency (URA) are facilitating a public-private partnership aimed at redeveloping Veneta's original downtown core and "four-corners" areas. The project's goal is to address vacant lots, abandoned properties, and derelict buildings, while also encouraging economic development, explained

Veneta's URA Program Specialist, Marina Brassfield.

The URA envisions a lively, pedestrian friendly downtown full of small retail and commercial businesses that meet the needs of area residents. The URA hopes to add to Veneta's employment base, increase the amount of "ready-to-occupy" space, reduce the need to travel to Eugene or other communi-

ties for work or entertainment, and promote sales of locally made products.

For motivated businesses, entrepreneurs, and property owners, the URA's incentive program, known as the Redevelopment Toolkit, offers grants and loans to help fund projects in the downtown district. It encourages local business development to provide retail and

services which do not currently exist in Veneta.

Small project grants can, for instance, help with the design and physical improvement of a building or business, including signage, enhancing facades, and improving the streetscape to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area. Large grants could include debt

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Community Coffee Encourages Partnerships

Veneta area residents participating in a Jan. 15 "Community Coffee" expressed a strong desire to address crime and public safety issues. They agreed with Sgt. Steve Sieczkowski and Veneta Mayor Sandra Larson that meeting this goal will require a partnership of well-intentioned citizens working with law enforcement, neighbors, and crime watch groups. It was a

productive kickoff for the first of four City-sponsored "conversations" that encourage residents to drive the topics.

"It's our community and we can make it whatever we want," explained Sgt. Steve Sieczkowski. In terms of deterring crime, he urged residents to "get involved, report suspicious behavior, install an outward facing camera system if you can,

and keep bright porch lights on." He also encouraged them to participate in Veneta's Community Policing policies.

Community Policing is a strategy in which law enforcement builds close ties with community members. For Veneta, that means working proactively with the Fern Ridge Neighborhood Watch Group, learning and taking steps to safeguard

homes and businesses, having a regular police presence at such troubled areas as the skate park and engaging with schools to help kids understand the role of police in their community.

The group of nearly two-dozen residents spent almost two hours sharing their concerns, offering their insight, asking questions, and seeking solutions. Many

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Please Join Us! Transportation System Plan Open House

February 15, 2018 * 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Veneta City Hall * 88184 8th Street * Veneta, OR

Come to the open house and talk with the project team about your ideas for how transportation should be improved in Veneta.

Key topics being discussed include:



- Transportation goals to work towards over the next 20 years
- Areas where transportation system or service improvements are needed
- Your ideas for solutions to improve conditions for walking, biking, public transit, driving, and freight movement

For questions contact Kay Bork at 541-935-2191 x314

CIVIC CALENDAR

February 2018

All meetings held at City Hall unless otherwise noted

6	Planning Commission Meeting	6:30 p.m.
7	Park Board Meeting	4:30 p.m.
12	City Council Work Session	5:30 p.m.
12	City Council Meeting followed by Urban Renewal Agency meeting	6:30 p.m.
13	Coffee with Sgt. Sieczkowski and City Administrator, Ric Ingham - Broadway Grill, 24992 W. Broadway	4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
14	Economic Development Committee Meeting	2:00 p.m.
14	Happy Valentine's Day 	
15	Municipal Court	8:30 a.m.
15	Transportation System Plan Open House	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
19	Presidents' Day 	Closed
26	City Council Meeting	6:30 p.m.

Urban Renewal

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assistance programs, development assistance such as environmental assessment and contribute funds toward System Development Charge (SDC) fees, as well as redevelopment grants. The URA budgeted \$75,000 for the Redevelopment Toolkit with additional funds available for high priority projects. The funds come from the increase in property values and revenues of redeveloped properties. Past investments have included West Broadway streetscape improvements, the Veneta Community Pool, and water infrastructure improvements.

"We've had a few applicants take advantage of the redevelopment resources already," said Brassfield. West Lane Fitness, for instance, used the façade grant program to improve the appearance of its facility on West Broadway. And, though she said each city will develop its own unique character through urban renewal efforts, some success stories include the town of Sisters. "None of its Western themed facades were there when Sisters started their initiative." Astoria helped Fort George Brewery locate in the City, the City of Bandon helped the Face Rock Creamery find a permanent

location, and Independence connected the waterfront area to downtown. "These are all great catalyst projects to spur development in adjacent areas," she explained. "They serve as great models of what we could do here."

The City hopes to encourage absentee land owners to invest in their properties by leveraging City resources. "There are currently six vacant lots and four derelict/nuisance properties in the redevelopment area," explained Brassfield. "One of our biggest challenges is reaching some of those absentee owners and having them take responsibility for bringing their properties up

to code. A few downtown properties have recently changed hands, though, and we've explained the program to the new owners and hope they might take advantage of the available resources."

In conjunction with the URA's recommitted focus on downtown, the City is launching the third year of Veneta Business Connect, a Business Retention and Expansion Program, which will be centered around downtown development.

Brassfield and City leaders will conduct outreach over the next several months. Contact Brassfield at 541-935-2191 x312 or mbrassfield@ci.veneta.or.us.

Community Coffee

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asked when they should call the police in a non-emergency situation. "Call and report any suspicious behavior that just doesn't feel right," Sieczkowski advised. "Though a deputy might not immediately respond, each call is logged and it helps us to identify trends or determine if a specific area needs more attention." It's very important, to focus on behavior rather

than appearance, though. "Listen to your instincts," he said. For instance, if a vehicle sits in one spot for an extended time while individuals repeatedly approach for short visits, that's unusual behavior. One citizen reported seeing four men unloading a truckload of bikes into a shed in the middle of the night. "Calling and reporting such incidents gives us probable cause to ask questions," the Sergeant said. It

also gives victims a record number should they need to make an insurance report. "Sometimes people feel like it's pointless to report a crime, or don't want to get involved," added Sandra Mayor Larson "But your report contributes to an overall picture of Veneta's crime profile, and that helps the City."

These open conversations among City officials and the citizens they serve

will continue during the next three months. The topics will be driven by citizen interests with the goal of answering questions and finding better ways to work together as a community.

City Administrator Ric Ingham will join Sgt. Sieczkowski at the next Community Coffee, Tuesday Feb. 13, from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the Broadway Grill, 24992 W. Broadway St.

Please Don't Litter - Free Spay/Neuter Program is Back!

With Spring just around the corner and the start of the breeding season, the City of Veneta will be providing free Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) services inside City limits in 2018. The TNR began in 2014 in an effort to reduce the number of feral and stray cats in our area.

Feral and stray cats are trapped, spayed or neutered, ear-tipped to mark them as altered, and re-

turned to their original territory, provided they do not face imminent risk. For the past three years, Veneta Veterinary Hospital and Willamette Animal Guild have performed the procedures. Whenever possible, adults and kittens that can be readily socialized are

offered for adoption.

The importance of this program is hard to overstate. Over the past 3 years 332 cats were altered, 219 of which were breeding age. Of those, 242 were feral and 90 were strays. There were 127 male cats and 205 females.

An average cat delivers as many as eight kittens per litter and as many as three litters per year, one female could potentially have more than 100 kittens through her productive life.

If you know of a stray/feral cat or kittens and need information on this free service, or would like to volunteer with trapping, transporting or foster care, please contact Teresa Warrick at 541-935-2191 x309

